or any matter relating to demand and acceptance of illegal gratification on the part of any employees of Employees Provident Fund Organization is noticed, necessary corrective measures to avoid recurrence of the same, and also, penal action as required under the rules is taken.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) Do not arise in view of (b) above.

**Percentage of child labour**

†1769. SHRI MOTILAL VORA. Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state.

(a) whether it is a fact that the number of child labourers has been constantly increasing in the country;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor along with the percentage of child labourers in the country at present; and

(c) the steps being taken by Government to reduce child labour?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI K. CHANDRASEKHAR RAO): (a) No, Sir. The number of working children in India has been varying as per the Census figures. The number of working children as per the last four census is as given below:—

| Year | 1971 | 1981 | 1991 | 2001 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Population of Working children (in Crores) | 1.07 | 1.36 | 1.12 | 1.25 |

(b) The existence of child labour in our country is primarily due to socio-economic reasons like prevalence of wide-scale poverty and parental illiteracy. As per the Census 2001, working children constitute 1.22% of the total population of India.

(c) In order to eliminate child labour in all forms, Government has formulated a National Child Labour Project Scheme (NCLPS). Under the Scheme, the working children are withdrawn from work and put into special schools with the objective to mainstream them into formal system of education. The Scheme, which was initially started in 1988 with 12 districts in the country, has been expanded to cover 250 districts across 21 States during the Tenth Plan.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.